



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

CITY OF JERSEY CITY OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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Contact: Kimberly Scalcione
KScalcione@jcnj.org

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Mayor Fulop Reaffirms vote “YES” on Municipal Question #1 to Create NJ’s First Municipal Arts Trust Fund

“Yes” Vote Establishes Direct and Sustainable Support for Artists and Arts Education in Jersey City

JERSEY CITY - As ballots begin to get mailed in Hudson County, **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** reaffirmed his support for a “YES” vote on Municipal Question #1 which would dramatically change support for the arts community in Jersey City.

If approved, Jersey City would be the first municipality in New Jersey to establish an Arts and Culture Trust Fund. The Arts Trust will be funded at a maximum rate of \$0.02 per \$100 of assessed property value, and will directly benefit local artists and arts organizations to help them grow and thrive.

“A vote ‘yes’ on Election Day for that small fee will collectively go a long way for the future of Jersey City’s dynamic culture, strengthening our vibrant arts scene and ultimately invigorating the community as a whole” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Now more than ever, we need to establish sustainable fiscal models to provide a strong foundation for our unique arts and culture to grow and thrive, now and for future generations to come.”

Mayor Fulop spent two years working closely with the Jersey City Arts Council to lobby state legislators to implement the mechanisms that would allow long-term arts funding. Jersey City was first to take action when the state bill was signed into law by the Governor in December 2019, allowing municipalities to implement an Arts and Culture Trust Fund.



“Jersey City is blessed with a vibrant arts community, and the administration and advocates have done an amazing job reminding voters that the arts in Jersey City have social, emotional, and economic impacts,” said **Anne Marie Miller, Director of Advocacy & Public Policy for ArtPride NJ**. “I hope that voters will vote ‘yes’ to the Arts and Cultural Trust Fund so that we can ensure the arts in Jersey City are financially sustainable and can continue to burst with creativity.”

“As a teacher, parent, homeowner, and arts leader in Jersey City, I have personally seen how the arts have profoundly impacted both individuals and the city at large. I hope that our voters recognize that the establishment of this Arts Trust will not only make the arts more viable

here in Jersey City but will, in turn, bring a thriving economy and vibrant inspiring atmosphere for all," said **Heather Warfel Sandler, Chair, Jersey City Arts Council.**

If passed, the program will be the first in New Jersey.

"A burgeoning arts culture helps fuel the city's economic engine by attracting business, building a strong sociocultural, expanding educational opportunities, and creating a unique and sought after culture that boosts property values while creating a unique sense of community for residents and visitors alike," said **Ward B Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey.** "Securing this funding for the arts is securing a vital resource for our overall community."

In an effort to address the pandemic's financial burden on taxpayers, Mayor Fulop explored delaying the implementation of the referendum for a year. After a series of conversations he held with Jersey City's arts leaders, City Council members, and in open public forums, the mayor and council decided to move forward on the enabling referendum despite the budget challenges.

"We are fortunate to live in a city that wants to invest in the arts. By doing so they are investing in Jersey City's cultural and economic future," said **Beth Cope, Managing Director of Jersey City Theater Center and member of the Jersey City Arts Fund Committee.**

Already severely underfunded by the state, the arts community has been among the most financially strained amid the pandemic. With no stable funding in place, Mayor Fulop announced arts relief funding in July where 119 artists and arts organization, 11 art program organizations, as well as 12 summer youth nonprofits and 12 community-based organizations received grants administered from the \$2 million in private donations raised through the Mayor's COVID-19 Community Relief Distribution. The financial boost has provided the temporary relief that artists and arts organizations have needed to address pandemic-related losses and funding and to create and implement visual and performing arts programming, with a priority on arts education for children as well as arts programming that will help revitalize commercial areas reopening.

Hudson County is one of the lowest funded areas for the arts in New Jersey, yet Jersey City's dynamic arts scene has been increasing at an exponential rate in recent years, requiring a more secure funding source to continue expanding with cultural programming and events. Per the Arts and Culture Trust referendum, the tax revenue will be used to expand afterschool arts education programming and directly support creative and cultural activities which includes performance, visual, and fine arts, music, dance, graphic design, film, digital media and video, architecture and urban design, humanities, literature, arts and culture education, historic preservation, museum curation, crafts, and folk arts.

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Wallace-Scalcione at KWallace@jcnj.org. ////